

Page 9, after line 10, insert the following:

--BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS--

Page 9, after line 24, insert the following:

--DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS--

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A method of cutting foils comprising a carrier film, [and] a decorative layer disposed thereon and [including at least one] a lacquer layer[; in particular stamping foils], [characterised in that firstly] said method comprising:

forming a removal track on the carrier film by removing a region of the decorative layer [(5) is removed from the carrier film (4)] by means of laser radiation [(12)] along [the] a cut line [(13)] and [then]

cutting the carrier film in the removal track [(13) formed in that way the carrier film (4) is mechanically separated] by means of a blade [(3)].

2. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 [characterised in that] wherein [a] said removal track [(13) is formed, whose] has a width [(b)] that is wider than the thickness [(d)] of the blade [(3)] that is used to cut [for cutting] the carrier film [(4)].

3. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 [and claim 2 characterised in that] wherein [a] said removal track [(13)] has a width of between 1 and 3 mm [in width is formed].

4. (Amended) A method according to [one of the preceding claims characterised in that] claim 1 wherein an Nd:YAG- or diode laser [(11)] is used for removal of the decorative layer [(5)].

5. (Amended) A method according to claim 4 [characterised in that] wherein [a] said laser [(11) with] has a power of between 20 and 50 [W] watts [is used].

6. (Amended) A method according to [one of the preceding claims characterised in that] claim 1 wherein a laser [(11)] is used, which has a transverse laser radiation [(12)] intensity distribution [transversely] with respect to the direction of advance movement of the foil and [(relative to the laser beam [(12))], which corresponds to a rectangular [(top hat)] profile [(Figure 3)].

7. (Amended) A method according to [one of the preceding claims characterised in that] claim 1 wherein the region of the decorative layer is removed by contacting the decorative layer with a laser beam at an impingement point on the surface of the decorative layer and wherein the carrier film [(4) subsequently to removal of the decorative layer (5)] is [severed by means of the blade (3)] cut at a spacing of less than 70 mm[, preferably less than 50 mm] from said impingement point.

8. (Amended) A method according to [one of the preceding claims characterised in that] claim 1 wherein operation is effected with cutting speeds of at least 40 m/min[, preferably at least 70 m/min].

9. (Amended) An apparatus [Apparatus] for [carrying out the] cutting foils comprising a carrier film, a decorative layer disposed thereon and a lacquer layer, [method according to one of the preceding claims] said apparatus comprising a laser [(11)] producing a [removal] laser beam [(12)] and a cutting blade [(3)], wherein [both] the laser beam [(12)] first contacts the foil at an impingement point on the surface of the decorative layer and [also] the cutting blade [(3) act] subsequently contacts the carrier film at a spacing from said impingement point, [each other in the cutting direction on the substrate (4, 5) to be cut, characterised in that the laser (11) and the cutting blade (3) are of such an arrangement and configuration that the cutting blade (3) is arranged following the location of action (16) of the laser beam (12) in the direction of movement (10) of the foil (1) forming the substrate,] and wherein the laser beam [(12) produces] forms a removal track in the decorative layer [(5) a removal track (13)] which is wider than the thickness [(d) of the cutting edge, which acts on the foil (1),] of the cutting blade [(3)].

10. (Amended) An apparatus [Apparatus] according to claim 9 [characterised in that] further comprising [the laser (11) is provided with] a device for [deflection of] deflecting the laser beam [(12)].

11. (Amended) An apparatus [Apparatus] according to claim 9 [or claim 10 characterised in that] further comprising [the laser (11) has] a device for varying the diameter of the laser beam [(12) which acts on the foil (1)].

12. (Amended) An apparatus [Apparatus] according to [one of claims 9 to 11 characterised in that] claim 9 further comprising a means for regulating the power of the laser [(11) is regulatable in dependence] based on the [speed] rate of movement of the foil [(1)].

13. (Amended) An apparatus [Apparatus] according to [one of claims 9 to 12 characterised in that] claim 9 wherein the spacing [between the locations of action (16) of the laser beam (12) on the one hand and the cutting blade (3) on the other hand on the foil (1)] is less than 70 mm[, preferably less than 50 mm].

14. (Amended) An apparatus [Apparatus] according to [one of claims 9 to 13 characterised in that] claim 9 wherein the laser beam [(12)] and the cutting bade [(3)] are arranged on the same side of the foil [(1)] to be cut.

Respectfully submitted,



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